

MINUTES
Underhill Conservation Commission
August 11, 2014
Underhill Town Hall

Present: Trevor Squirrel (chair), Karen McKnight, Barbara Greene, Dan Steinbauer, Merianne O'Grady, and Jeff Moulton

Opening Remarks: Trevor stated that UCC members Nancy McCrae, David Rogers, and Pat Lamphere contacted him to say that they were unable to attend tonight's meeting. Since five UCC members were present, this constitutes an official quorum (5 out of 8 minimum).

Several present indicated that they heard that new roads are under construction at the Ethan Allen Firing Range. Reportedly, this construction has cut through designated wetlands on the northeast side of the Range. This property is within the Underhill Town boundaries. Since it is under the auspices of the U.S. Army, neither the town or the state of VT has any legal jurisdiction. However, it was pointed out that Federal regulations regarding wetlands could be relevant. Trevor stated that he was not aware of this activity. He will contact Town Administrator Brian Bigelow to discern if any communication with the Town by the Firing Range had occurred

Cranebrook Trail Ordinance: Per Trevor, as clarified at last month's UCC meeting, litigation involving the Cranebrook Trail is still in process. Therefore, any action on the current Underhill Trails Ordinance is currently on hold until further notice

Invasive Education / Outreach Project: Trevor stated that a productive discussion occurred at last month's meeting regarding the critical issue of invasive plant and insect species. Since such species are rapidly spreading into VT, our Commission is planning to offer educational workshops and work-parties within the next few months, and also in the Spring of 2015.

Trevor looked into the idea of UCC having an educational booth at October's Harvest Market. However, all booth spaces are taken for this year's event. We are currently on the waiting list, and will have the opportunity for a booth at next year's Market.

We reviewed the possibility of a workshop(s) in November, to be held on Saturday 8th and/or the 15th. The idea of offering two sessions focusing on the separate topics of plant and insect invasive species was considered a viable option. Each session could be held in the morning, and be 2 1/2 to 3 hours in length.

Trevor has begun inquiring as to possible presenters at these workshops, and has been in contact with Keith Thompson, the County Forester, and UVM Extension. He is also thinking we might involve an Underhill Master Gardener who also has extensive knowledge of invasives.

Outreach is another approach to educate townspeople about invasives. The relatively new Underhill Farmer's Market, which is held on the 3rd Saturday of the month in Underhill Center,

is a consideration. Karen offered to contact the organizer to determine if she can set up an informational table for the August 16th market. It was suggested that The Nature Conservancy website is a good source of material on invasives which could be printed out and distributed. Dan will be in South Burlington that day, and might have the opportunity to pass out information as well.

Details about the invasive workshops will be posted on Front Porch Forum and other local formats. Also, it was suggested that UCC members could be present in the Town Hall basement on Election Day in November to publicize the upcoming sessions.

The Underhill Town website is another opportunity to educate residents and others re: invasive species. We need to be sure the information we post there is accurate, so UCC needs to work on this before having it available on-line. Trevor offered to do some preliminary research.

The question of outreach to the Underhill schools was raised. Trevor indicated that involving students will be an important component of UCC's program on invasives. Teachers at the Underhill Middle School, for example, are very interested in being involved. It was suggested that we work with the schools to develop an educational program in conjunction with the school calendar. Jeff recalled being part of the "Elf" project while attending Underhill elementary school years back, in which he learned about VT plants and animals.

There are other invasive species, such as a plant species which attaches to boat hulls through a slimy material it produces, and is it then transported from one waterway to another. Trevor agreed that although this may not be a primary concern in Underhill, it still should be included in the workshop material.

Town Plan 2015 - Natural Resources section: Trevor briefly reviewed UCC's assigned task on the 2015 Underhill Town Plan, which is to be completed by May, 2015. Specifically we will be evaluating the Natural Resources section of the Plan. (Trevor sent each member the 2010 version on-line prior to this meeting, along with accompanying commentaries.) He pointed out that our work will be more of an update than a rewrite. Members should read the section prior to the September meeting. Our focus should be on the following: can parts be deleted/ condensed; incorporation of new legislation and new topics; determine if document is sufficiently 'reader-friendly', review for consistency, etc.. Further discussion will follow at the next meeting,

Approval of Minutes - July 14th, 2014: Minutes were approved, with agreement that the wording under Opening Remarks, in reference to UCC's Vice-Chair status, be deleted.

New Business: No new business was presented.

Adjournment: The motion to adjourn was moved by Barbara Greene, and seconded by Karen McKnight.. The meeting was officially adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 8th, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Underhill Town Hall

Respectfully submitted, Merianne O'Grady, UCC member, 7-16-14. **DRAFT**

Final
TJH 9/8/14